

Within the last 10 years, the rate of forcible rape has increased more alarmingly than any other index crime in Seattle (figure 1). Reported rapes increased from 66 in 1963 to 278 in 1972, which represented an enormous jump of more than 420%. This increase in reported rape prompted considerable concern and served to stimulate an analysis of 1972 rape offenses, victims and offenders.

A sample of 190 (73%) of the "founded" rape offenses for 1972 were examined. The analysis which follows is based upon that examination and reports supplied by the Seattle Police Department.

Time: According to the national Uniform Crime Reports, forcible rape is most prevalent from May - October, reaching its peak in October. Although this same pattern is generally true in Seattle, it is very weak. When the frequency is broken down by months, July and October emerge as the months with the greatest number of reported rapes. Similarly, the May - October "critical period" identified in the Uniform Crime Reports accounted for only 53.5% of the reported rapes and represents almost no pattern at all. (Table 1).

Table 1. Reported forcible rape by month (SPD, 1972)

MONTH	NUMBER	MONTH	NUMBER
January	13	July	33
February	22	August	26
March	22	September	25
April	18	October	33
May	25	November	29
June	25	December	25

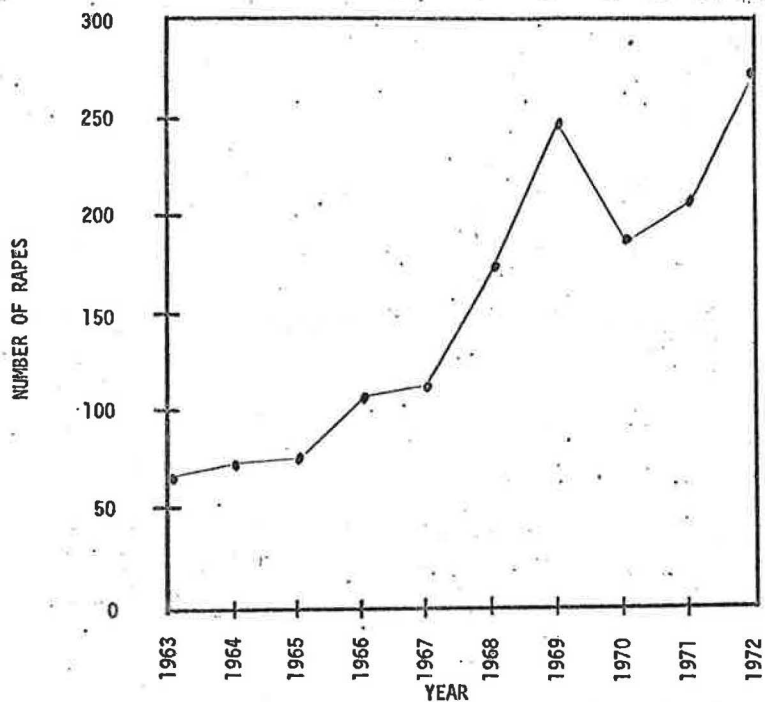
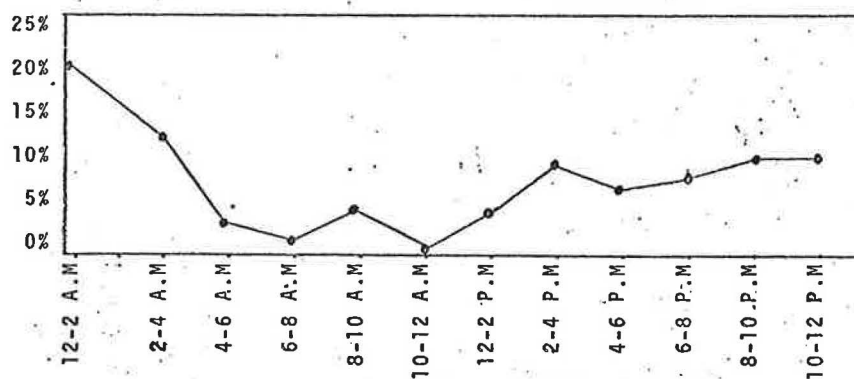


Figure 1. Ten year trend for reported rapes in Seattle (Seattle Police Department).

The sample analysis indicated time of day and day of week were much more important indicators of risk. Saturday was the peak day for this offense, particularly between the hours of 8:00 p.m. and 2:00 a.m. This six-hour interval accounted for 50% of the reported rapes (Table 2).

Place: In 1972, the location of forcible rapes tended to concentrate in four major areas of the City (figure 2). Almost 20% of all reported rapes occurred in a cluster of five census

Table 2. Time of day of forcible rape offenses.*



tracts spanning Capitol Hill. High frequencies of rape were also noted in the University District, the north tip of West Seattle and the Mount Baker area.

Most rapes occurred in private residences (64%); usually the home of the victim. Only 17% of the rapes occurred in parks or on streets, 13% in automobiles and 4% in commercial establishments such as roller rinks, taverns, etc.

Method: More than 85% of all rapes were accompanied by verbal threats, physical force or use of a weapon. The use or threat of a weapon was present in 27% of all cases. Injuries in the form of gunshot wounds, stabbings, lacerations and burns were noted in 21% of all reports. Injuries were noted in 30% of the 51 rapes which involved acquaintances/friends/relatives, while only 17% of the stranger-to-stranger offenses resulted in injury.

* 6% unknown

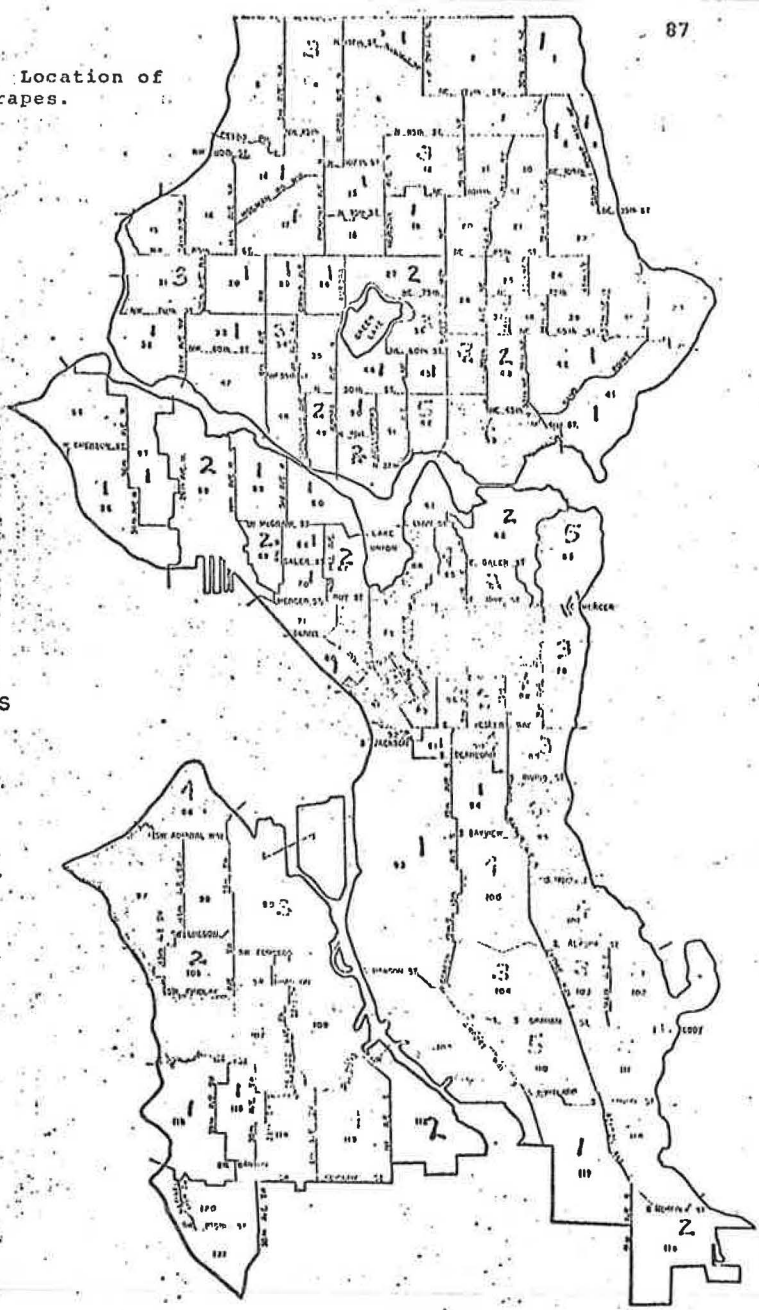
Figure 2. Location of forcible rapes.

CITY OF SEATTLE
CENSUS TRACTS



RAPE 1972

0	
1-2	
3-5	
6-8	
7-12	



Although most rapes were solo occurrences, more than one suspect was noted in 10% of the offenses. In most cases which involved multiple suspects, one primary offender committed rape while one or more secondary suspects merely observed or subdued the victim. Conversely, one suspect raped more than one victim in 5% of all reports (particularly in cases which involved two or more women who accepted rides from a stranger).

Only 5% of the rapes coincided with other felonies such as burglary or robbery. In 27% of the rapes, the offender and the victim were acquainted (14%), friends (10%), or relatives (3%). Similar to the pattern with other crimes against persons, acquaintances and friends committed brutal rapes more frequently than strangers. Stranger-to-stranger street rapes (17%) and hitch-hike rapes (10%) were seldom accompanied by brutality.

OFFENDER

According to Goldner (1972), national statistics show that 18-year-olds commit the greatest number of rapes; 19-year-olds follow closely as principal offenders. The offender ages gradually decrease over 5-year intervals and is extremely rare beyond age 40.

The "youthfulness" indicated by Goldner was not observed in the offense sample. Although 20% of the offenders were described as less than 20 years old, most victims reported that the suspect(s) was in his mid-20's (\bar{X} = 24.5 years old) or early 30's. Less than 5% of the suspects were described as more than 40 years old.

Analysis of the 1972 offense reports indicates that the rapist population was composed almost entirely of whites and blacks, with the latter in greater proportion than the former.* Black suspects exceeded white suspects in absolute numbers as well as in terms of their proportion in the general population (Table 3). The percentage of black suspects was nearly seven times greater than their proportion in the Seattle population. (Despite the high percentage of black suspects, more than half of all rapes were intra-racial).

Table No. 3. Rape Suspects by Race

RACE	NUMBER	PERCENT
Black	143	66%
White	69	32%
Amer-Ind	2	.9%
Mex-Amer	1	.5%

We were able to examine 14** of the 19 arrest reports for 1972 to determine any additional offender characteristics. The numbers are so small that generalizations are difficult and must be viewed

* Goldner, Norman (1972) reports that other national studies indicate that white males commit rape in greater absolute numbers than black males.

** 5 records were unavailable.

VICTIM

Victim characteristic information is very scanty. According to the sample offenses analyzed, rape victims tended to be very young, white, and frequently known to the offender. The summary findings are described below:

<u>RACE</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
White	154	78%
Black	36	18%
Eskimo	6	3%
Amer. Ind.	3	1.5%
Puerto Rican	1	.5%

<u>AGE</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>	<u>CUM. PERCENTAGE</u>
10-14	26	13%	13%
15-19	55	28%	41%
20-24	60	30%	71%
25-29	32	16%	87%
30+	24	12%	99%

The concept of victim precipitation or provocation was too subjective to analyze. To avoid or minimize controversy, various "high risk" situations were separated and are discussed by category.

Hitch/Accept Offer of Ride: The offense reports indicated that 20 victims (10%) had willingly accompanied the suspect or requested a ride. In most cases, the rape occurred in the vehicle.

Temporary/Permanent Co-habitation: Eighteen victims (9%) willingly shared a residence with the suspect on a permanent or temporary basis, i.e., shared house, apartment, motel or hotel room. In approximately one-half of the cases, the victim and suspect experienced voluntary intercourse on previous occasions.

with some suspicion. However, the summary findings are described below:

<u>RACE</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>PERCENT</u>
Black	9	64%
White	4	28%
Eskimo	1	7%

<u>AGE</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>PERCENT</u>
15-19	2	14%
20-24	7	50%
25-29	2	14%
30-34	1	7%
35-39	0	0%
40+	2	14%

<u>OCCUPATION</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>PERCENT</u>
Student	3	21%
Unskilled Laborer	5	35%
Skilled Laborer	4	28%
None	2	14%

<u>RELATIONSHIP TO VICTIM</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>PERCENT</u>
Stranger	7	50%
Acquaintance	1	7%
Friend	3	21%
Relative	3	21%

Perhaps the most startling finding associated with offender profiles was the history of previous arrests. Thirteen of the 14 persons had previous felony arrests which included 15 assaults, 7 robberies, 4 burglaries, 3 drug offenses, 7 morals arrests, and 9 previous rape arrests.

Most arrests resulted from a victim complaint and identification of the suspect (42%). The police apprehended one suspect at the scene (7%), and successfully investigated and apprehended 6 other suspects (42%). One suspect surrendered himself to the authorities (7%).

Drug or Alcohol Involvement: Twenty-two victims (11%) had been drinking or using drugs with the suspect prior to the rape. In most instances, the victim and suspect met in a tavern or bar and retired to a private residence in which the rape occurred.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM RESPONSE*

The ability to follow particular offenders through the criminal justice system is almost an impossible task. The State of Washington has no central information agency which is capable of monitoring arrests, charges, and court dispositions across jurisdictions. As a result, each jurisdiction is responsible for its own records and those records are seldom accessible or useful to curious investigators.

The analysis which follows is a very shaky offender flow chart for persons arrested for rape in Seattle (1971). Since no criminal justice agency other than the Seattle Police Department maintains records by crime type, the information is incomplete (figure 3).

In 1971, there were 208 reported rapes. The police cleared 106 cases (51%) within the year. Offenses were cleared when they were no longer under investigation, i.e., suspects were arrested, the victims or prosecutor refused prosecution, the cases were unfounded, modus operandi tied particular offenses to identified offenders, etc.

In the same period, 48 persons were arrested for suspicion of rape. However, only 12 of these 48 persons were charged with the same offense. The other 36 persons were charged with aggravated assault (7), burglary (3), non-aggravated assault (2), carnal knowledge (2), miscellaneous sex offenses, disorderly conduct, soliciting prostitution (1) and suspicion (11). Simultaneously, 4 persons arrested for robbery were subsequently charged with rape.

* Information based upon 1971 Seattle Police Annual Report. Information for 1972 not available.

By the end of 1971, only seven rape cases were disposed, including three cases which were held over from the previous year. Of the seven defendants in those cases, two were found not guilty or dismissed, one was referred to juvenile court, two were placed on probation and two were sentenced to jail or prison. Thus, less than one-half dozen persons were processed through the entire system as rape offenders. This is an incredibly low rate which must reflect a combination of victim reticence or fear, unsystematic processing of offenders by criminal justice authorities and plea bargaining on the part of defendants.

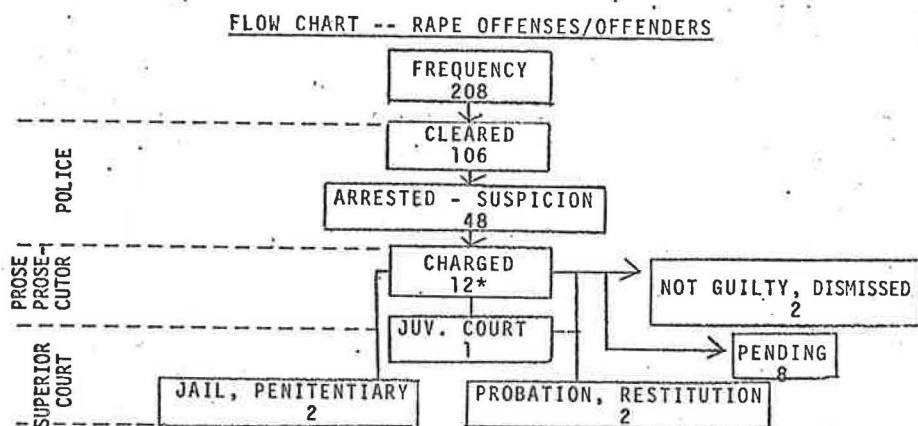


Figure 3. Flow of rape cases through the criminal justice system.

PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REDUCTION OF RAPE

The number of reported rapes has continued to climb substantially in recent years, both in the city of Seattle and across the nation. There are some who believe that there are no more rapes occurring, but that women are more willing to report the offenses today than they were a few years ago. Others believe that the number of rapes which occur is increasing. Whether the rape problem is growing or whether it is simply becoming more evident to us, it is important that something be done to decrease the level of rape and the level of fear which the potential of that crime generates.

A task force of persons involved in work with rape victims and those involved in apprehension and prosecution of offenders has concluded that the most important step to control and reduce this crime is to increase the number of successful prosecutions. This approach is agreed upon for two reasons. First, it is believed that many rapists are multiple rapists. Thus, they will continue to rape until they are caught and prosecuted. Second, a number of the rape offenders do not seem to be "sick people", but individuals who believe that they can exert their will over others with impunity. In both instances, it is important to make offenders aware that they have a high probability of being caught for this crime, and if found guilty, that the offense will be treated as a serious one.

In examining the possible methods to increase successful prosecutions, the task force recommended that the focus should be on methods to increase victim cooperation and improve the quality of the evidence.

Because this crime involves a personal assault, there is a greater chance than usual that the victim will have sufficient knowledge to be able to help identify the assailant. Furthermore, in many rape cases, the victim has had some prior contact with the offender. The evidence which indicates that a rape has occurred usually comes from an examination of the victim. The sooner after the incident, the more likely that there will be conclusive evidence of the rape having occurred. The victim must also be prepared to identify the offender and to testify in the case. Therefore, the single most essential ingredient in a rape case is having a cooperative victim.

The task force also concluded that there were a number of reasons why victims of rape were reluctant to cooperate in the apprehension and prosecution of offenders. They include the following: (1) a desire to keep anyone from knowing that the rape occurred; (2) fear of retaliation from the offender; (3) mixed feelings about involving the offender in the criminal process; (4) feeling that the criminal justice system doesn't really care; (5) emotional strain of the prosecution and unwillingness to become the "person on trial".

The recommendations for overcoming victim reluctance to cooperate are inter-related, and thus should be taken together. However, they will be described individually so that all of the elements of the recommendations can be fully discussed.

Recommendation 1: That model procedures for the handling of rape be developed from the time of the initial report of the case through the courtroom trial.

Model procedures are to be developed in such a way as to make the process as easy as possible for the victim, while still protecting the Constitutional rights of the defendant, and to increase the quality of

the evidence available to the police investigators and to the prosecution. The procedures would be developed by identifying how rape cases are now handled at every stage of the process. Those procedures would be carefully examined to see whether changes could be made which would ease the strain for the victim, improve the evidence available for investigation and prosecution, and increase the number of successful investigations and successful prosecutions. Specialized consultant assistance would be sought for each stage of the proceedings to help identify alternative procedures which might better accomplish our objectives. The procedures would be reviewed by a task force representing all the parts of the system, and those procedures effecting any single agency would be referred to them for review and recommendation. The final recommended model procedures would be in the form of recommendations to the appropriate legislative bodies and agencies.

Recommendation 2: That an expanded capability be developed at Harborview Medical Center for receiving, assisting and obtaining evidence from rape victims.

Harborview would become identified as the principal place to go for assistance if you have been the victim of a rape. The service there would be developed to be especially sensitive to the emotional requirements of the victim and the legal requirements of the criminal justice process. The emergency room physicians would be trained in specific medical techniques for handling rape cases, and would be sensitized to the needs of the victim under conditions of emotional stress. There would also be social workers who are available to the emergency room to immediately relate to the rape victim and assist them through medical and follow-up services. The hospital would also

have a capability to provide counseling for individuals or for groups to assist them in dealing with the problems often created by rape incidents. Harborview would also work with other medical facilities to gain their cooperation in a common set of medical practices for rape cases. If accomplished, this should increase the general quality of the evidence collected from medical examinations in rape cases. We would also encourage those medical facilities to refer people to Harborview if they needed follow-up assistance.

Recommendation 3: The expansion of the Rape Relief advocacy service for rape victims. (University YWCA)

Many women who are victims of rape need someone to help guide them in their decision about what course to take, and if they decide to report the crime and prosecute, someone to help them through the process. The advocacy service is intended to provide this kind of support for a victim of rape. The advocate would accompany the victim through every stage of the medical and criminal justice procedure to make it as easy as possible for the rape victim, and to assure that appropriate procedures are followed. It is hoped that this kind of assistance would encourage more women to be willing to report the crime and to prosecute the offender. The advocates, who are knowledgeable of the process, could also give assistance to the agency personnel as they try to deal with the rape case.

Recommendation 4: That there be established a third party reporting service.

Some women who have been raped are willing to report the offense, but are not willing to prosecute for any one of several reasons. However, the information which they have about the assailant may be of assistance if that assailant has committed other rapes. If there is

a rape victim who is willing to prosecute, who apparently was raped by the same assailant, the additional information provided by the victim who is not willing to prosecute may be helpful in identifying the assailant and gathering evidence for prosecution. This would be a small effort designed to see how many women are in that position and how useful the kind of information that they would provide is in apprehending offenders.

Recommendation 5: That there be undertaken an extensive education program to make known to victims of rape those services which have been described.

In addition, this program would provide information to help prevent rapes, and to encourage women who have been raped to report the incident. An education program would have several purposes. First, it is important to convince the victims of rape that the reporting of the crime and the prosecution of the offender is very important for the safety of other persons. Second, to make known to victims of rape that there is a sensitive and helpful system to respond to their problem. Third, to communicate to women how to reduce the risk of rape and what to do if confronted with the possibility of such an assault. Fourth, to communicate to the general public the importance of increased intolerance for sexual assaults. There is a lack of public discussion about this issue and a lack of clarity about the kind of behavior that the society will and will not tolerate in these instances. This kind of educational campaign might discourage some potential offenders from committing assaults, and might increase the willingness of judges and jurors to take a more serious view of these types of cases.